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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Honorable George W. Ball
The Under Secretary of State
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear George:

During the course of my appearance before the Defense Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee on 4 and 5 February 1963, references were made by members to your testimony before the House Select Committee on Export Control on 3 October 1962. At that point I had not read the published hearings of your testimony and I so indicated. I have had this matter researched and have developed the following:

1. A proposed statement was read to me by Mr. Hilsman over the gray telephone on 2 October. It was my opinion that it accurately reflected the situation at that time and, further, since there appeared to be no compromise of security, I authorized its use for an open hearing.
2. There is a prefatory statement in the published hearings of your appearance which was not included in the agreed-on memorandum. These two sentences immediately precede the agreed-on memorandum and read as follows:

In the last few weeks we have read much in the newspapers of the military buildup of Cuba by the Soviet Union. Quite clearly it does not constitute a threat to the United States.

In addition, there were two statements in the agreed memorandum which do not appear in the public record. These read as follows:

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If the SAM sites are to be operated solely by Cuban personnel, six months to a year of training will be required. There is a considerable amount of other new equipment which has not been precisely identified but it is believed to include a large quantity of electronic gear.

3. During the questioning before the Select Committee other statements were made which were referred to by members in my appearance of 5 February. Some of these points are quoted below:

Mr. Ball: These ships are kept under the closest surveillance, and we have a system of antisubmarine patrols which I think is quite effective.

Mr. Lipscomb: Have you any indication of what the cargo was on these ships?

Mr. Ball: We may have. I don't have it here. We usually know in quite specific terms what cargoes have been carried by the Soviet ships, those directly under Soviet operation.

Mr. Lipscomb: Mostly arms and ammunition?

Mr. Ball: Mostly arms and ammunition, and also technical personnel, military technical personnel, and economic technical personnel as well.

Mr. Ball: Our information with regard to the availability of armament to Cuba, including the shipments which have been received in the recent buildup, is, we believe, quite complete. Our intelligence is very good and very hard. All the indications are that this is equipment which is basically of a defensive capability, and that it does not offer any offensive capabilities to Cuba as against the United States or the other nations of the hemisphere.

Mr. Ball: In the first place, our intelligence with respect to Cuba, as I say, is very hard and very good and very comprehensive, as a result of the number of refugees constantly coming out, and other kinds of opportunities that are provided to gain information with regard to the Cuban situation.

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4. Mr. Ford queried me with reference to my previous mention of the three reports of 21, 22 and 23 September and contrasted it with your statement of no evidence of missiles. This exchange is quoted below:

Mr. Ford: In the previous paragraph he said, or admitted he knew of some missile installations that had a 25 to 30 nautical mile range. Here is the Under Secretary of State making this statement: 'There is no evidence' -- that is pretty categorical -- 'of any surface-to-surface missile installations in Cuba capable of firing to a greater range.'

Mr. McCone: Yes. I think that CIA became concerned about these reports that started coming to us September 21st. They did not give us information on which we could absolutely prove the existence of missiles, but what they gave us was a concern that started a program of targeting four flights and insisting on flights in order to give us the kind of information that we developed. We could not report from what we had on September 21st, or 22nd, or 23rd that there actually were missiles there.

5. Mr. Lipscomb was attempting during my appearance to relate the statement of particular items of equipment and numbers of personnel with the 1 November estimates covering all categories of equipment which were displayed on a chart in the Subcommittee room. Mr. Lipscomb referred to the "official estimates" furnished by you and undoubtedly, among other things, he had in mind your statement which reads as follows:

I have attempted to give a summary here of the situation based on our intelligence estimates which the intelligence community has made with regard to this.

Consequently, he was concerned about the differences in what he termed estimates and queried whether the increases shown as of 1 November came into Cuba during the period from 3 October to 14 October. The agreed-on memorandum was, of course, not a complete inventory of all types of armaments in Cuba and I stated at the hearing that I knew of no inventory of equipment produced during September and October. I have since checked and determined that there was no formal intelligence document on inventories of Soviet military equipment in Cuba on 2 October.

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These are the facts as I know them and I hope they are helpful to you. I am not certain that further efforts to develop this with the Subcommittee would be productive; however, I would be glad to discuss this with you if you wish.

Sincerely,

John A. McCone
Director

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